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Dworshak visitor center to have one-day closure Feb. 5, 2000

Orofino, Idaho – The visitor center at Dworshak Dam will be closed to the public this Saturday, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' recreation manager here.

Staffing levels and wise use of taxpayers' payroll dollars drove the decision for this closure.

"We're balancing some real-world issues like people and money, like any other entity has to, and that's what drove the decision for our facility closure. We're closing the Dworshak visitor center on Feb. 5, 2000, just for the one day, after carefully considering the range of issues from public access to the reality of winter staffing shortfalls," said Erik Petersen, natural resources manager at Dworshak.

He explained that historical records show that we an unmistakable pattern of very low seasonal visitation at this time of year.

"We get an average of about 15 people per weekend day. While we'd always prefer to have these facilities open all the time, that's not always possible or necessarily cost-effective. In this instance, a one-day closure will save the taxpayers some facility operating costs as well as the price of an overtime shift for an hourly-rate employee," Petersen said.

Petersen said he does not anticipate this to be the first of many such closures but then added that it will give him a measuring tool for future requirements, if and when they occur.

The gates on top of Dworshak Dam will also remain locked all day Feb.5 and will affect access to the Bruce's Eddy Recreation area. The visitor center will reopen for business Feb. 6 at 10 a.m. For more information, call Paul Pence, Dworshak park manager, at (208) 476-1256.

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